

Grooming

As ALS progresses, you may notice that everyday activities like combing your hair or brushing your teeth are becoming more challenging. There are a number of strategies and devices that can help you continue to perform these tasks independently, while saving energy.

Grooming and Personal Hygiene Activities

It is important to have a sturdy place where you can sit down and access the things you need in your bathroom. This might be a chair, wheelchair, rolling shower chair, or even the seat on your four-wheel walker or rollator. If you are sitting on something with wheels, be sure to lock the wheels or engage the brakes.

It can also be helpful to rest your arms on the counter if they feel tired or weak when you are doing things like shaving or brushing your teeth.

Assistive devices that can help with grooming activities include touchless faucets, bath mitts, electric razors, electric nail clippers, thick- and long-handled brushes, and blow dryer mounts.

Modifying the way you do your grooming activities and using assistive devices like these can help you save energy and continue to do these tasks on your own for longer. If you notice that certain activities are taking longer than normal or are using more energy, you can ask your caregiver for help. Whether you do these activities independently or with assistance, it is important to continue to take care of your body and practice good hygiene.

Oral Hygiene and ALS

Maintaining good oral hygiene is important for everyone, but it is especially important for people living with ALS. Unaddressed plaque and bacteria growth can lead to gum disease, thrush (an oral yeast infection), respiratory infections, and other issues.

If maintaining good oral hygiene is becoming challenging, share your concerns with your neurologist, speech language pathologist, or occupational therapist. You can also ask your dentist for suggestions. If going to the dentist's office is inconvenient or not possible, find out if there is a mobile dentist in your area who could come to your home.



Assistive devices that can help with oral hygiene include foam tubing to make handles easier to grip, a universal cuff to hold your toothbrush, electric toothbrushes, suction toothbrushes, toothpaste dispensers, flossers with handles, and oral swabs.

Other things that you may find helpful for maintaining good oral hygiene include Biotène Dry Mouth Oral Rinse, water pics, and electric tongue cleaners. You may need to look around for the right devices that will meet your specific needs. Ideally, they will be lightweight, portable, and easy to use.

Grooming devices are not usually covered by insurance. However, you can ask your ALS clinic or local ALS Network care manager if they have any that you can borrow. You can also visit the ALS Equipment Guide to learn more and purchase devices directly.

Modifying the way you do oral hygiene activities and using assistive devices can help you save energy and continue to do these tasks on your own for longer. However, if you notice that certain activities are taking longer than normal or are using more energy, you can ask your caregiver for help. Whether you do these activities independently or with assistance, it is important to continue to maintain good oral hygiene.

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